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School of the Manticore



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This article is an expansion based on a canon element. For canon information on this topic, follow the link to The Witcher Wiki:

https://witcher.fandom.com/wiki/School_of_the_Manticore.



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"Does make a person curious though. What'd witchers be like in a land with saber-wieldin' warrior women and gold dragons and whatnot?"
—Rodolf Kazmer, Dwarf merchant

The **School of the Manticore**, or **Alqatil** (Zerrikanian: *Slayers*), is a witcher school that was headquartered in the far east, on the edges of the Korath desert. They rarely venture on the other side of the Continent, and thus remain mostly an enigma to Nordlings.

School of the Manticore



General Information

What little is known to those beyond the edges of the Korath is substantiated only by rumor. Among the many claims made are that these witchers do not use signs, are little more than glorified royal guards, and are innately prone to deception and low cunning.

Contents	[hide]
1. History	
1.1. Early Inception	
1.2. Schism of Rhys (origin of the School of the Basilisk)	
1.3. Division over inclusion of women for training in the school (Origin of the School of the Dragon)	
1.4. Formation	
1.5. Golden Years	
1.6. Downfall	
1.7. Later Years	
2. Witchers	
3. Witcheress	
4. Mages	
5. The Twin Keeps	
6. Trials	
7. Arsenal	
7.1. Weaponry	
7.2. Armor and Shields	
7.3. Alchemy	
8. Notes	
9. Trivia	

Variation(s)	Manticore Guild Alqatil
Nickname(s)	The Order of the Stinging Lion
Type	Witcher School
Organization Information	
Predecessor	School of the Bear
Status	Extant
Successor	School of the Dragon (The only excision that survived until the 14th century)
Key Personel	
Founder(s)	Iwan
Notable member(s)	Iwan Merten Jehkiye Sastimos
Area of Activity	
Headquarters	Behelt Nar Bialsuf Alsarea
Location	Korath Desert
Area(s) served	Zerrikania Far East Nilfgaard

History

Early Inception

Around the time the schism happened at the School of the Bear where Ivar Evil-Eye failed to takeover, his group split off and was further joined by others who also didn't share Grandmaster Arnaghad's philosophy, with one of these individuals being Iwan. As this group headed into the Tir Tochair Mountains for a rumored fortress to found the School of the Viper, Iwan realized he also didn't agree with Ivar's view, so as the group headed to the mountains, Iwan and others who also doubted Ivar split off and headed to where they knew they could find work: Elskerdeg Pass in the Tir Tochair Mountains. This pass sat on the edges of the infamous Korath desert where Zerrikanian caravans regularly tried to pass through the treacherous area to trade with the western portion of the continent. In a short time, Iwan and his fellow witchers went from being solely hunters to skilled defenders as they escorted caravans safely back and forth across the desert.

Schism of Rhys (origin of the School of the Basilisk)

TBA

Division over inclusion of women for training in the school (Origin of the School of the Dragon)

TBA

Formation

One day in the desert, Iwan and his group found a royal Zerrikanian caravan under attack by a pair of manticores and ran in to help. After they had killed the monsters, they discovered the caravan was headed to meet mages at Aretuza and among their group was the Zerrikanian Queen's Court Mage, Nasira Faizan. Having seen how skilled the witchers were, Nasira then offered them substantial pay and an audience with the queen if they could get her safely back home to Zerrikania and they readily agreed. Once they got to Zerrikania's capital, the sorceress told all about the "alqatil" exploits and the queen offered a proposal: if the witchers would work exclusively for the crown and guard their merchant caravans and emissaries, then Zerrikania would build a castle on each side of the desert to help build up the school. The witchers agreed and the two castles were built: Behelt Nar in the west and Bialsuf Alsarea in the east, the latter of which Iwan stayed at.

Golden Years

Over the years, Nasira worked with Iwan to recreate the mutation process though Iwan was a bit evasive of giving the full details, having not known the full process himself. They even tried to apply the mutations to some of the famed warrior women of Zerrikania but these experiments were deemed inconclusive. Despite this, they brought in the best warriors to be trained at the new School of the Manticore, with a focus on defense and employing potions. To add to their arsenal they added in special shields made of meteoritic steel and silver. During this time Iwan later changed his name to Imad Asem and became the personal witcher to the Zerrikanian queen.

Downfall

In the fall of 1146, the Queen of Zerrikania organized a royal caravan to arrange a marriage between her son and the Princess of Metinna. As many royal family members and Zerrikanian's court were going, almost the entire school of witchers were called on to protect the caravan across the desert and despite his advanced age, Imad decided to also go. However, what later became known as the Day of Fire happened as the caravan passed within the Fiery Mountains, where the caravan was met by a towering Fire Elemental. Despite having most of the school's witchers there, they didn't have any siege artillery and were unprepared for such a threat. By the time the battle was over, almost all the witchers had been killed along with half of the royal family members and a third of the Zerrikanian court. Due to this, Zerrikania shunned the few remaining witchers and the country turned its focus on finding a safe sea route to the west instead. Having lost the Zerrikanian crown's support, the few witchers that remained fell into decline.

Later Years

One of the school's members, Merten, traveled to Toussaint in 1201, seeking the legendary armorer Tyen'sail to order forging of a Grandmaster Gear. Instead, he ended up converting to Lebioda's teachings. Baptized as Shavel, he renounced his witcher past and became a priest.

By 1272, the few Manticore witchers that remained had turned back to monster hunting to make a living and return in the winter to the western fortress, Behelt Nar.

Witchers

- Iwan
- Merten
- Jehkipe Sastimos

Witcheress

- Zhira of Zerrikania

Mages

TBA

The Twin Keeps

The Manticore School of Witchers had two castles built to serve as the grounds for their expansion. The Twin Keeps, as they were later called, Behelt Nar and Bialsuf Alsarea are each situated directly across from one another, with the former set on the west, and the latter set on the far east, overlooking the entrance to the Oasis. Both keeps began construction in the early 12th century and were finished and fully operational a decade later.

Behelt Nar served as the training school, where boys began their lives as initiates as early as seven until they completed their Trials, usually by thirteen. Bialsuf Alsarea would thusly serve as the home of matured, fully-blooded witchers until they fell out of favor with the Zerrikanian Monarchy and the castle was seized.

After the fall, Behelt Nar became the defacto headquarters for the School of the Manticore, but the creation of new witchers has dwindled considerably.

Trials

Much like other Schools, the trials of the Manticore School remain a mystery. What is known is that they were as much a challenge to overcome as any other. Records even suggest that while the bulk of the trials occurred in Behelt Nar, the final trials saw yet unmutated boys of thirteen trek across the Korath to Bialsuf Alsarea, where they would undergo the final trial. The sorceress Nasira managed to reverse engineer the process and later formulated what would become the Manticore School's own unique mutagenic recipe.

Her innovation led to the creation of witchers whose physiology allows them to absorb and metabolize their potions more effectively. This meant that Manticores were capable of not only producing some of the most potent potions, poisons, and blade oils in the known world, but that when ingesting potions could better absorb their alchemical properties and if afflicted with poison, can often metabolize it without the need of anti-venom.

Another rumored trial, called the Trial of Venom and Claw, entailed the successful harvesting of a live manticore's venom, from which the unmutated boys would have to successfully synthesize an anti-toxin. It was rumored the boys would be sent out in pairs to retrieve the venom and upon their return the master witcher overseeing their trial would inject both with a dosage small enough not to kill them instantly. Both boys would then have to work together in a race against the clock to brew the cure. Only 1 in every 15 were estimated to have survived.

Arsenal

Weaponry

As the School of the Manticore settled into its new identity, they adopted several practices from the Steppe Clans of the Korath. Among them was the primary usage of alchemy to bolster the efficacy of themselves and their weapons. Manticore Witchers also made ready usage of unconventional weapons in their trade. Namely, the Manticores oft paired their steel and silver swords with a shield. Others still made use of weaponry unique to Zerrikanian martial traditions. This ensured they were prepared to handle a wider variety of martial tools at any given moment and further added to the shroud of enigma that followed them.

Known bladed weapons of Manticore Witchers:

- **Zerrikani Saberra** - A curved double-edged blade with a passing resemblance to a falchion.
- **Zerrikani Spear** - A spear with a pronged blade intended to resemble a dragon's tail.
- **Zerrikani Khopesh** - A 'half-moon' curved blade most often used by cavalry.
- **Kaskara** - A long, double-edged blade with a spatulate tip, usually worn on the back.
- **Nzappa-zap Axe** - An ornate handaxe often used in short distance combat.

Known ranged weapons of the Manticore Witchers:

- **Crossbow** - An import from the Northern Kingdoms, used only in recent years.
- **Dragontail Whip** - Adapted from the cattle-whips used by the Steppe Clans, this whip is often equipped with serrated blades on its tip and serves both to ensnare prey and cause deep lacerations from a distance.
- **Bow and Arrow** - A tried and true staple across all the lands of men, perfected by the warrior women of the Steppes.

Known Blunt weapons of the Manticore Witchers:

- **Tsvimbo** - A simple club that in the hands of a master can shatter bone like glass. However, this was notably a 'non-lethal' option for a Manticore on the road.
- **Zerrikani Mace** - A blunt weapon with a heavy head on the end of a handle, six small flanges pierced with trefoils broken with small architectural moldings.

Armor and Shields

- **Manticore School Armor** - Notably lightweight, but strong, the armor predominantly used by the Manticore School is comprised of leather and fitted with tightly woven chainmail. The gloves are reinforced with silver studding and attached to the tunic are a series of leather straps which affix to the wearer a bandolier of potions for quick access. The armor sets are designed to work in arid climates but can easily be layered for cold or wet regions during travel without losing functionality.
- **Manticore Shield** - In the style of the shields wielded by the famed Faithel, the shields of the Manticore School are comprised of a combination of meteoritic steel and silver, with the skin of a draconid usually stretched over it for added protection. Some Manticores have been known to notch their shields so as to use their weapons while guarding, or to allow ease of potion usage.

Alchemy

Given the wide variety of their weaponry and a fighting style that incorporated a shield more often than not, the Manticores needed a way to make up for their lack of defensive options. With both hands occupied, they lacked the ability to cast signs as effectively in the midst of battle as their Western counterparts. The solution came in the form of a marked focus on potion, poison, and blade oil usage, as well as an emphasis on foreplaning. Many of Zerrikania's native beasts and monsters are themselves innately suited to providing potent ingredients, and there is flora that exists nowhere else in the Continent except in the Oasis. Using what was available to them, the Manticore School developed recipes for their witcher potions that made them far more potent with fewer side-effects.

Using these same techniques, and as the Manticore School flourished, Nasira further developed its own unique mutegenic formulae, further allowing the Manticores to better take advantage of their alchemy. When using potions Manticores better absorb their alchemical properties and can often metabolize poisons without the need of anti-venom.

Notes

- This article is a **FAN-MADE Expansion** on the **Manticore School**.
- This article is open for collaboration with the wider fanon community.

Trivia

- The arsenal of the Manticore School is based in African and Near-Eastern weaponry.

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